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LETTER

TO

THOMAS SMITH, ESQUIRE;

OCCASIONED BY

HIS LETTER

TO THE

LORD PROVOST AND MAGISTRATES OF EDINBURGH.

CONTAINING MATTER OF SERIOUS CONSIDERATION

FOR THE

PUBLIC AND THE MAGISTRATES.

BY AN INHABITANT OF EDINBURGH.

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LETTER, &c.

Edinburgh, 22d March 1800.

SIR,

VIEWING, as I do, that, though the repreſentatives of every community are reſponſible to their conſtituents for their actings in their official capacities, yet, from its being the buſineſs of no particular perſon, or claſs of perſons, to remind them of their duty, many highly improper and unconſtitutional acts are allowed to paſs over in ſilence; the peruſal of your letter to the Lord Provoſt and Magiſtrates, upon their late Act of Council, making the Church of St Andrew a collegiate charge, afforded me, an humble individual, but, as is natural, feeling an intereſt in the welfare of the community under which I live, real ſatisfaction.

It has been often ſaid, and is alſo pretty generally believed, that the Oppoſition in the Houſes of Parliament, has proved one of the greateſt bulwarks to Britiſh liberty; and, to compare ſmaller things with greater, I apprehend it may alſo be allowed, that the Magiſtrates of moſt of our burrows would not act the leſs circumſpectly, from

 ſuppoſing,

ſuppoſing, that their mode of management might at one time meet the public eye.

The late exerciſe of *diſcretionary* power in the preſent Magiſtrates of Edinburgh, in collegiating St Andrew's Church, is, ſurely, of dangerous tendency and example. If ſuch diſcretionary power is entruſted to the Magiſtrates *for the time*, there is no ſaying how far the deſire of patronage, and of providing for their friends, while in office, may hurry men, otherwiſe incapable of committing a mean or diſhonourable action. That this *deſire* is *ſtrong*, we have already ſeen, in the caſe of a late worthy and reſpectable Chief Magiſtrate, who held out, as a reaſon for preferring to the head chair in the Univerſity a relation of his own, who, whatever his merits, had certainly no claim to that honour, in competition with Dr BLAIR; '*that* HE *might never* '*again have it in his power to provide for him in* '*that manner;*' And, in the ſtill more recent inſtance, now under conſideration, where the preſent Magiſtrates have exerciſed a far higher ſtretch of power, in *collegiating* a charge formerly *ſingle*, for the purpoſe of introducing a gentleman, patroniſed, no doubt, by a reſpectable body of our fellow citizens, whom, probably, the preſent Magiſtrates, like our late Lord Provoſt, thought 'it might not '*afterwards* be in *their* power to provide for.'— That the immediate ſucceeding Magiſtracy might, likewiſe, on account of ſome *political* or *family* connection, *collegiate* LADY YESTER'S; the following Magiſtracy, NEW GREY FRIARS; the ſucceeding, the COLLEGE CHURCH, ſo long as a *Single* charge

charge remained in Edinburgh, and might, in like manner, erect *new* ones, is, however, a point equally indiſputable with the legality of the meaſure lately propoſed by Mr JACKSON, and carried into effect by the Town Council of Edinburgh.

Had it been at all competent for the Magiſtrates, of their own authority, to collegiate any Church in Edinburgh, where could they have found a more proper occaſion of doing ſo, than while the College Church was left almoſt entirely without worſhip, during the indiſpoſition of the late Mr Lundie. This Church was, at that time, allowed almoſt entirely to run into diſrepair, and there is reaſon to believe, that, had the vacancy not been ſo worthily ſupplied as it has been in Mr Dickſon, it might ſtill have remained almoſt tenantleſs.

In another point of view, however, and which, I am ſurpriſed, Sir, has not occurred to your ſuperior penetration, the Magiſtrates have been guilty, not only of an *unprecedented ſtretch of power*, but alſo, of *injuſtice* to the Clergymen in the *ſingle* charges in Edinburgh.

It has always hitherto been underſtood to be a ſettled point, that no Clergyman can be brought from the country, to any of the *collegiate* charges in Edinburgh, except the High Church, to which *alone* the Town has reſerved to itſelf, a right of preſenting, either from the City or Country, on account of the Magiſtrates and Judges ſitting in that Church. Upon what principle, then, the Magiſtrates, ſuppoſing them entitled to collegiate St Andrew's, have, *in defiance of uniform and uninterrupted practice*, placed a Clergyman, who had

but

but a few days previous thereto been ſettled at *Kilmarnock*, in this *collegiated* charge, to the excluſion of Mr BLACK, and of Mr DICKSON, who have ſo worthily filled *ſingle* charges in this City, and who were *entitled* to the preference, remains to be accounted for.

To enlarge, however, Sir, upon this ſubject, was not my principal intention, in addreſſing to you the preſent letter; but, by throwing out ſome hints, upon what may alſo properly be ſaid to fall under the DISCRETIONARY POWER of Magiſtrates, ſuggeſt a ſaving to the Revenue of the Town, if, indeed, it be ſo improperly laviſh of its funds as is generally believed; or, if not, afford its Managers an opportunity of juſtifying themſelves from the *ſuſpicion* of ſuch an improper application of the funds of the City.

Amongſt the different accounts ſubjoined to your Addreſs to the Town Council, publiſhed ſome time ſince, there are various articles of 'law 'expences.' Theſe, it is not to be ſuppoſed, a community, like the City of Edinburgh, can be entirely free from; and the *items* which compoſed theſe accounts, were, probably, no higher than might be expected in the common courſe of buſineſs. There is, however, a ſpecies of law-ſuits, in which the Town, or rather its *Managers*, are at times engaged, which, it is to be hoped, form no part of the City's Expenditure under this article.

We have lately heard of more than one law-ſuit againſt the Procurator Fiſcal of the City of Edinburgh, and even againſt individual Magiſtrates, for illegal and unwarrantable ſtretch of authority, in impriſoning,

impriſoning, *de plano*, reſpectable inhabitants of the City, for fines impoſed at the diſcretion of the Magiſtrate, to be ſummarily levied, without allowing the perſons, againſt whom they are awarded, even to go home for the money. In ſome of theſe actions, it is notorious, that, after the fulleſt deliberation, the Court of Seſſion have found, not only the Procurator Fiſcal, but, in one caſe, the individual Magiſtrate, liable in DAMAGES AND EXPENCES.

When we attend to the nature of the burden, which a gentleman, who undertakes the duty of a Magiſtrate, lays upon himſelf, we muſt naturally allow, that, acting gratuitouſly for the benefit of his fellow citizens, he is entitled to their gratitude and reſpect, ſo long as he diſcharges his duty faithfully, to the beſt of his judgment. We alſo know, that we are bound to preſume, that he has acted *bona fide*, in the execution of his duty, till the contrary ſhall have been proved; and, of courſe, till that be done, to defend him againſt any charge for malverſation in office that may be brought againſt him.

Whether this doctrine can be carried the length of ſcreening the Procurator Fiſcal, in like manner, may admit of more doubt, he being a man of the law, and, of courſe, preſumed to underſtand it, and bound to exerciſe his judgment.—As to this, more hereafter.

It is alſo a known fact, and not to be diſputed, that the Supreme Court of this Country, never encourage any wanton or groundleſs charge, againſt inferior

inferior Magiſtrates, but uniformly *preſume* in their favour, where it cannot be proved to a demonſtration that they have acted illegally; nor is there an inſtance of any inferior Judge being ſubjected in damages, where there was even the ſmalleſt ſhadow of his having acted from an error in judgment, or through inadvertency.

To apply this to the preſent caſe.—If a Magiſtrate keep within the line of his duty, and do not either act in the very face of juſtice, or make a law-ſuit for himſelf, he cannot be ſubjected in damages. His conſtituents, as already ſaid, are called upon to defend him, ſo long as his conduct is defenſible; and, if he ſhall be acquitted of having deviated from the line of his duty, they are bound to indemnify him of any expences incurred, even although the caſe ſhould not be ſo clear as to ſubject the other party in expences to him, in conſequence of having brought againſt him a charge which they had not been able to ſubſtantiate.—This, ſurely, is, to the Magiſtrate, indulgence ſufficient.—But, can it be maintained, that, after a Magiſtrate has been found guilty of invading the very rights of which he is the guardian, the damages awarded on account of his improper conduct, or the expences incurred in defending him whilſt he was preſumed innocent, ought to fall a burden upon the very community whoſe privileges he has violated!

If, then, the Magiſtrate who iſſues an illegal warrant, or exerciſes any other ſtretch of power, be liable for the conſequences reſulting from his improper conduct, and muſt make *ſolatium* to an individual for any injury he may thereby ſuſtain; it

it ſurely, of neceſſity, follows, that the Procurator Fiſcal, or other Officer of Court, upon whoſe application, or through whoſe inattention or bad advice, ſuch illegal act has taken place, muſt alſo be liable, if not to relieve the Magiſtrate whom he may have miſled, at leaſt the Community whoſe money he receives for diſcharging his office. For, whatever plea of hardſhip there may be, in ſubjecting one in damages for the execution of an office which he diſcharges *gratuitouſly*, none ſuch can be maintained, where the office has either a ſalary or certain emoluments annexed to it!—Of this propoſition no more forcible illuſtration can be adduced, than that in the caſe laſt mentioned; though only a *majority* of the Court were for ſubjecting the Magiſtrate, they were *unanimous* in finding the Procurator Fiſcal liable, with the exception of the Lord Reporter, who was for acquitting both.

I do not preſume to ſay, Sir, that the damages and expences, thus awarded, are to fall a burden upon the funds of the City of Edinburgh. I hope that is not the caſe; but I at the ſame time know, that it is generally believed that it is, and that, if the Magiſtrates do not chuſe to give proof to the contrary, the ſame will ſtill continue to be believed.—I know that the preſent is not a period for the public throwing away money, where they are not bound to do it; and I may venture to ſay, that, were the City of Edinburgh bound, as a tutor, to render an account of Charge and Diſcharge yearly, ſuch an article would be ſtruck out of their accounts.

Being engaged on this ſubject, it may not be amiſs, and it may not be the leaſt important leſſon

the Magiſtrates of Edinburgh, or any other Magiſtrates, who are in the uſe of iſſuing ſummary warrants of commitment, may receive from this letter, if they deign to peruſe it; that ſuch proceedings are held in the utmoſt reprobation by the firſt Lawyers and Judges in the Kingdom; and that, where any ſuch are brought under the cognizance of the Supreme Court, there is every reaſon to believe, that they will be treated as illegal, and the iſſuers of them puniſhed accordingly.—In matters of civil debt, a regular citation is given, and the Magiſtrates never judge, without conſulting with their Aſſeſſors, after which, and after all objections to the juſtice of the claim have been maturely conſidered, a charge muſt be given, and a day aſſigned for payment.—In caſes, however, where any paultry miſdemeanour or breach of the peace is alledged, the perſon complained on is charged to appear, often next day, before the Magiſtrates, probably without having the reaſon why he is called upon explained to him, and, unleſs he come prepared, with a ſum of money in his pocket, ready to anſwer *any* fine, the Magiſtrates, without conſulting with any Aſſeſſor, may, in their wiſdom, be pleaſed to impoſe upon him, may be hurried from the Council Chamber to Priſon, without having an opportunity of being heard upon, or of obviating, the charges of which he is accuſed!

Such ſporting with the liberty of the inhabitants is, indeed, not attributable to the preſent Magiſtrates of Edinburgh, being, it is believed, an inveterate practice; but the ſooner it is aboliſhed the more

more chaſte, and more conſiſtent with law and juſtice, will their proceedings become; for, until the ſneer which has long prevailed, at the term, COUNCIL CHAMBER JUSTICE, ceaſe to operate, the Magiſtrates of Edinburgh can never expect to preſerve the dignity and reſpect to which they are entitled, as Magiſtrates of the Capital of Scotland.

Another act of *diſcretionary* power, probably of greater conſequence to the generality of the inhabitants of the City of Edinburgh, which the Magiſtrates have lately taken upon them to exerciſe, is—the relinquiſhing the aſſize upon bread.—Whether, in exerciſing a power of ſo delicate a nature, at a period ſuch as the preſent, the Magiſtrates acted with that degree of prudence and deliberation, which ought to characteriſe their meaſures at ſuch a juncture, it is not for me to determine; but, of this I am certain, that, when the houſehold loaf was 1s. and the fine loaf 1s. 4d. to put the public entirely in the power of the bakers, by aboliſhing the only reſtraint under which they lay, and at once compel thoſe who already found it a burden ſufficiently heavy to pay 1s. *per* loaf, to pay, for one not intrinſically to them a *farthing* better, 1s. 4d. muſt have been a neceſſity cogent indeed, and muſt have *ſeemed* to carry along with it advantages which have *never yet* been realiſed!

The Magiſtrates, it may be ſaid, did not adopt this meaſure entirely of their own accord, but, before entering into it, conſulted with the Lords of Seſſion, and obtained their aſſent.

What paſſed at this conſultation, it is impoſſible for the public to be acquainted with; but it is natural to ſuppoſe, that the Magiſtrates would repreſent the ſtate of the market as ſuch, that it would be impoſſible for them longer to fix an aſſize, without irritating the minds of the people, by ſeeming to give *their* ſanction to a charge in itſelf apparently exorbitant; and that the beſt meaſure for them to purſue, would be, to leave the bakers to fix the price themſelves, reſtricting them only to *one* particular kind of bread, compoſed of the *whole flour*, expecting that thus, whilſt bread of a good and defined quality would be ſecured to the public, a competition might ariſe amongſt the bakers, who, deſirous of rivalling each other, would ſupply the inhabitants at a cheaper rate than that fixed by the aſſize.

This, it occurs to me, Sir, muſt have been the principal, if not the only motive, the Magiſtrates could have had, in relinquiſhing, at ſuch a period, a plan which has ſo long been followed, without any change, by their predeceſſors in office; but whether, in doing ſo, they exerciſed a ſound and proper diſcretion, ſeems to admit of great doubt.

In a memorial for the bakers of Edinburgh, ſubmitted ſome years ago to the Judges of the Court of Seſſion, *&c.;* and, if I recollect well, preſented to Parliament, ſtating the grievances under which they laboured, and craving redreſs, they give us to underſtand, in pretty plain terms, that, if they were allowed to bake bread of the *entire flour*, they would require no other relief. That, to be relieved

lieved from the baking of *houſehold* and *fine* bread, has been, for many years, the anxious aim of the bakers, is known to many of the inhabitants.

With the ſecrets of this buſineſs, Sir, I do not pretend to be acquainted; but, were I a Magiſtrate, or Ruler, of any place, I would always view with a jealous eye, any innovation which ſeemed to be *particularly deſired* by a claſs of men, who had in their power ſo principal a charge, as the ſupplying their fellow citizens with food. To concede, therefore, to the bakers of Edinburgh, at a period ſo unprecedented for dearth, (though I truſt not ſo for ſcarcity, as is imagined) as the preſent, a privilege they have been ſo long, and ſo anxiouſly wiſhing for, is arguing a degree of confidence in the bakers of Edinburgh, which, I confeſs, I, for one, would be unwilling to grant them; and cannot ſee is defenſible upon any ground of reaſon or expediency.

If the Magiſtrates expected, that, by aboliſhing the aſſize, they would create a competition among the bakers, they were miſtaken. Theſe gentlemen know each other too well to be thus taken in, nor do the committees from the *ſocieties* of bakers in the New Town, Portſburgh, *&c.* concert their meaſures unwiſely with the *corporation* of bakers of Edinburgh. Or, if, by the adoption of this meaſure, they wiſhed that all the inhabitants of Edinburgh ſhould *judge for themſelves*, and take a good bargain wherever they could find it, they have themſelves prevented the effect propoſed, by confining the bakers to *one* kind of bread. Had the baking of *different* qualities of

bread

bread been allowed, the public would ſtill have been *equally* qualified to exerciſe their judgment, and to chuſe what they thought the moſt frugal; whilſt, as the law preſently ſtands, thoſe who prefer, and are willing to pay for fine bread, are debarred from it; and thoſe, again, whoſe neceſſities would induce them to prefer the coarſer, but equally nouriſhing, are obliged to pay a *medium* between the coarſe and fine, for bread not to them a whit better than the old houſehold, it being a general obſervation, that the bread preſently baked is not preferable, if equal in quality, to the former coarſe bread.

To ſuppoſe that the bakers of Edinburgh are at preſent ſupplying the public at a rate *below* what they can *purchaſe* for, is ridiculous. The reverſe of this muſt be the caſe, or elſe they muſt have had a ſtock on hand; in which caſe, the Magiſtrates were unwarranted in departing from the aſſize. Few of the bakers in Edinburgh, it has been reported, are over fond of purchaſing wheat, ſince the aſſize was taken off; if the Magiſtrates, therefore, can inſtruct that grain can be purchaſed at any particular rate, but is refuſed, they muſt, no doubt, be entitled to hold that as the ſelling price, and to fix an aſſize accordingly; the replacing of which, inſtead of raiſing, will, there is every reaſon to hope, have the effect of reducing the price of bread in Edinburgh.

Having now, Sir, ſuggeſted ſeveral particulars which ſeem to me deſerving the conſideration and attention of the Magiſtrates, and of the public, I would

would beg leave to enquire, whether the regulations which were ſome time ago adopted by the then Magiſtrates, for the purp .e of endeavouring to leſſen the Expenditure of the City, have been ſince ſtrictly and properly attended to?

In your Addreſs to the Town Council, publiſhed laſt year, I obſerve, that it was very properly enacted, that the Chamberlain ſhould find caution for his intromiſſions, to a certain extent, and that, after ſome delay, the bonds of caution had actually been lodged. It naturally becomes matter of enquiry where theſe bonds are depoſited.—Have they been recorded in the books of Council and Seſſion, in the Town Court books, or in any other regiſter, the only places of ſafety for valuable writings?—No! they were appointed to be lodged with the *Clerk*, thereby expoſing them to every chance, either of being miſlaid, loſt, or abſtracted.

By an act of Council, paſſed in the 1786, regulating the expenditure of ſmall ſums for repairs, *&c.* the ſubſcription of the Magiſtrate authoriſing the ſame, is declared to be neceſſary to entitle the tradeſman to payment of his account; and another act of Council, paſſed on the 18th April 1798, proceeds on the following Motion, 'Bailie JACKSON repreſents, That the act of Council 1786 fixes, that all eſtimates agreed to by the Council, ſhall be entered in the Eſtimate Book; but as the public works in the City are very extenſive, it occurs to him, that the adminiſtrators ſhould in future advertiſe for eſtimates, and prefer what appears to them to be the loweſt and beſt, proper

'ſecurity

'ſecurity being given for its execution; and ad-
'vertiſe for any work, the expence of which ſhall
'exceed twenty pounds Sterling; and in other re-
'ſpects, that the act 1786 ſhall remain in force.'
This Motion being referred to a Committee, they reported as follows: 'The Committee appointed
'to conſider of the Motion by Bailie JACKSON, as
'remitted to them on the 4th inſtant, Report it as
'their unanimous opinion, That the Magiſtrates
'and Council ſhould approve of the ſame, and paſs
'an act of Council accordingly; with this addi-
'tion, that every piece of work ſhall be carried on
'under the inſpection of the City's Overſeer; but
'before the account to which the eſtimate may refer
'is paid, the firſt Bailie's Committee ſhould, in fu-
'ture, recommend to a few of their own number
'to examine the work, and to report as to the ſuf-
'ficiency of the ſame, before paſſing of the act in
'Council.'

This Motion and Report having been conſidered by the Magiſtrates and Council, 'they unanimouſ-
'ly approve of the ſame; and, for the more punc-
'tual obſervance of the ſeveral particulars before
'mentioned, appoint this act to be read at the an-
'nual election of Magiſtrates, immediately after
'the reading of the act, 5th July 1786, regulating
'the payment of tradeſmen's accounts; and fur-
'ther, appoint the foregoing act to be printed, and
'copies paſted up in the Council Chamber, and
'Town Clerk's Office, alongſt with the act 1786,
'*that none may pretend ignorance.*'

This

This Motion of Bailie JACKSON's, and the act paſſed in conſequence of it, breathe a ſpirit of intereſt in the welfare of the community highly commendable; ſhutting the door, not only againſt the impoſitions of tradeſmen, with whom they were unconnected, and who might occaſionally be employed by the Town; but alſo, ſhewing thoſe in Council, who might naturally have expected to be preferred to their employment, that that was not, of itſelf, a recommendation, but that, if their eſtimates were not lower, or equally low, with thoſe of others, perſonal favour muſt yield to the public intereſt.——But mark what follows!

The City Guard, the debt upon which at preſent amounts to about L. 3000, as admitted in the Town's Anſwer to your Addreſs, coſts the Good Town about L. 332 annually for cloathing to the ſoldiers. For this furniſhing, in conſequence of the preceding Motion and act of Council, eſtimates ought to have been given in. The preſent Treaſurer, however, who, in common with the reſt of the Council, muſt have heard theſe acts read, and by his oath *de fideli*, was bound to attend to them; regardleſs of the rules for his conduct there laid down, took upon him, of his own authority, even although he did not deal in the articles to be furniſhed, to commiſſion cloth for the cloathing of the ſoldiers belonging to the City Guard, and to juſtify his conduct upon the ground of its being his *right*.

This ſubject having become matter of diſcuſſion in the Council, and having been remitted to a

Committee, the following Report was made: 'The 'majority of the Open Committee report their o- 'pinion, that, in respect of part of the articles be- 'ing already commissioned, as usual, that the Trea- 'surer should be allowed to go on in furnishing the 'City Guard for the present year, but that they 'should be afterwards furnished by estimate.'—— This Report was afterwards approved of, by a *ma- jority* of the Council, upon a division.

Not only the *opinion* contained in this Report of the Committee, but the *ratio* upon which it pro- ceeds, must afford matter of surprise. The Town Council, who had, in April 1798, Resolved, That the *lowest and best estimate* should be preferred; in the 1800, deliver it as their opinion, that the Treasurer, who had, without any authority, assumed an office he was not entitled to, 'should be allow- 'ed to *go on* in furnishing the City Guard *for the* '*present year*.' Thus investing themselves with the power of making and breaking acts at pleasure. But the *reason why* he should be allowed thus to *go on*, is still more absurd; 'in respect of part of 'the articles being already commissioned, *as usual*.' The Treasurer, as well as the rest of the Council, had eyes to read, and ears to hear read the act of Council. Even if it had been *usual* for the Trea- surer to make such furnishings, this act, proposed by his friend Bailie Jackson, which, when he took his oath *de fideli*, he unquestionably swore to ob- serve, instructed him, that they were *no longer* to be furnished in this manner, but *by estimate*. For him, therefore, to presume to act in the face of his duty

duty ſo clearly preſcribed to him, entitled him to *animadverſion*, not to *reward*.

It has generally been underſtood, that members of Council are preferred to the Town's work, upon equal terms. In this inſtance, however, it was intimated to the Deacon of the Tailors, that, if he did not vote for a particular Clergyman, on the occaſion of a diſputed call, he ſhould be excluded from a *ſlice* of the Guard cloathing, which he accordingly did loſe, in conſequence of voting contrary to his *inſtructions*.

Had this occurred in conſequence of a lower eſtimate having been given in, all would have been well, a ſaving thereby accruing to the Town. But it is to be regretted, that the Town's employment ſhould be made the engine of political corruption!

It muſt afford matter of extreme ſurpriſe, that Bailie JACKSON, the perſon upon whoſe motion the act of Council already noticed was paſſed, and of which the Treaſurer's conduct was a downright violation, ſhould have given *his aſſent* to the preſent Motion, aſſigning as a reaſon, his feeling himſelf bound to ſupport his friends. A reaſon, which clearly points out Mr JACKSON's zeal for the public good, As if he had ſaid, 'If the motion I made, 'and the act following upon it, can ſave any thing 'to the *Good Town*, at the expence of thoſe with 'whom *I* am *unconnected*, I ſhall be happy at it; 'but if it ſhould have the effect of interfering with 'the *intereſt* of *any of my friends*, then I would ra-'ther that its operation ſhould ceaſe.'

Had eſtimates for cloathing the City Guard been taken in, there is no doubt that they would not have

have exceeded *one half* of the ſum *uſually* paid, and which, it is natural to preſume, the Treaſurer, from his anxiety to ſecure the job, will charge. Whether the Magiſtrates of Edinburgh feel themſelves warranted, at the preſent moment, in beſtowing about L. 160 or L. 170 upon their Treaſurer, and thoſe who may have voted along with him, on the occaſion already alluded to, for the purpoſe of ſecuring a ſhare in this employment, is a queſtion they alone are qualified to anſwer. The number of men employed in the City Guard is, or at leaſt they are charged at, 84. To ſee if Cloaths be really furniſhed to the *whole* number might be an enquiry not unworthy any of the Magiſtrates.

For addreſſing this letter to you, Sir, I would feel myſelf bound to apologiſe, did I not think, from the ſpirit with which you have formerly, and on the preſent occaſion, ſtepped forward for the intereſt of the City, of which you was lately one of the Magiſtrates, that you would receive in good part, any attempt, however feeble, to render it ſervice. And that, whether the ſentiments in the preſent letter, may altogether coincide with your own ideas or not, you will not think them the leſs entitled to conſideration.

I remain, 4 JA 55

SIR,

Your moſt obedient and

very humble Servant,

AN INHABITANT OF EDINBURGH.